



# THE CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM IN SCOTLAND

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According to the teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg—Scientist, Philosopher, Theologian and "Seer" (1688-1772)—the Last Judgment of the Christian Church, foretold by the Lord in the Gospels and by John in the Revelation, took place in A.D. 1757. The former Heaven and Earth were to be regarded as having passed away, being replaced by the New Jerusalem mentioned in the Apocalypse which came down in the form of the "New Church." Consequently, the Second Advent of the Lord had been realised in a spiritual sense by the exhibition of His Power and Glory in the New Church thus established. In his monumental work *The True Christian Religion* Swedenborg says "Since the Lord cannot manifest himself in the person (to the World) . . . and yet he has foretold that he would come and establish a New Church which is the New Jerusalem, it follows that he will effect this by the instrumentality of a man, who is able not only to receive the doctrines of that church in his understanding, but also to make them known by the press. That the Lord manifested himself before me, his servant, that he sent me on this office, and afterwards opened the sight of my spirit, and so let me into the spiritual world, permitting me to see the Heavens and the Hells, and also to converse with angels and spirits; and this now continually for many years, I attest in truth; and further, that from the first day of my call to this office, I have never received anything appertaining to the doctrines of that church, from any angel, but from the Lord alone, whilst I was reading the Word."

Swedenborg himself did not visualise any immediate change in church organisation and continued his adherence to the Lutheran Church until he died at London in 1772. In the years which succeeded this date a few of his admirers in Sweden, Germany and Britain read and greatly prized Swedenborg's religious works. Commencing with *Arcana Caelestia* (issued at London in 1749), these comprise some twenty different books, the last of which, *The True Christian Religion*, was published at Amsterdam in 1771. In addition, another book *The Coronis* remained incomplete. This work showed that the New Church is the crown of all the churches that have existed on earth.

Ten years after Swedenborg's death, Robert Hindmarsh, a London man aged 23, went to Canterbury to spend the New Year with his father.

While there, he borrowed from a friend several of Swedenborg's works, and was immediately convinced of the truth which lay in them. Back in London, he began to study the Writings with two or three friends, who met on Sunday mornings at Hindmarsh's Clerkenwell home. A notice inserted by them in the newspapers invited others interested in Swedenborg to join the group. Consequently, on Thursday, 5th December, 1783, at 5 p.m., five men met at the London Coffee House, Ludgate Hill. These decided to meet regularly on Thursday evenings for further study and they were soon joined by others. On 27th January, 1788, a Chapel was opened in Great Eastcheap, London, where the pastor was James Hindmarsh, father of Robert Hindmarsh mentioned above. On 1st June of the same year, James Hindmarsh and Samuel Smith were ordained to become the first New Church Ministers and Priests. The ordination was effected when the sixteen male members in attendance at Eastcheap drew lots; the twelve selected laying their hands on the heads of the persons so ordained. Both ministers formerly had acted as Wesleyan preachers.

Called by a circular letter issued by members of the New Jerusalem Church in London, the first Conference of the New Church was held at Great Eastcheap on 13th April, 1789. These meetings continued annually until 1792; in the following year, two separate Conferences were held, one at Birmingham and the other at Great Eastcheap, the members of the church then being in two groups as the result of a controversy.

At the latter gathering, a grandiose plan was adopted for the future organisation of the New Church in Britain. The scheme was episcopal in character with one "Third Degree" minister whose function was to be the superintendence of the whole of the affairs on the New Church in Great Britain. Next, twenty-four Second Degree ministers were, in general, to govern all the ecclesiastical affairs each in his own division. First Degree ministers were to be in charge of the local societies or congregations subordinate to the ministers of the Second Degree within whose district or jurisdiction they should be placed.

Under this scheme, Scotland was divided into four areas:

- (1) The twenty-first District to consist of, and include all the Counties North of the Tweed as far as the Firth of Forth on the East, and the Clyde Firth on the West, including Linlithgowshire, Lanarkshire, and Renfrewshire.
- (2) The twenty-second District to consist of, and include, Dumbartonshire, Perthshire, Murrayshire, Nairnshire and all the Counties East of them.

- (3) The twenty-third District to consist of, and include, Argyleshire, Inverness-shire, and all the Western Isles.
- (4) The twenty-fourth District to consist of, and include, all the Counties and Isles North of Murray Firth and Inverness-shire, together with all the Orkney and Shetland Islands.<sup>1</sup>

This scheme was not carried into operation, and a period of stagnation in the affairs of the new Church ensued, no further Conference being held until 1807. It is known, however, that at this period, a few Receivers of the Doctrines were to be found in parts as distant from organised societies as the Orkney Isles.<sup>2</sup>

#### THE DOCTRINES IN SCOTLAND.

Even during Swedenborg's lifetime his works had been introduced to Scotland.<sup>3</sup> In October, 1769, Professor Traill, who occupied the Chair of Divinity at the University of Glasgow, received an unexpected parcel of books. The identity of the sender was not indicated, but some days later a letter arrived which should have accompanied the books. This was from a Dr. Messiter, who informed the Professor that the Hon. Mr. Swedenborg had asked the doctor to send some of his recent works to Mr. Traill. Dr. Messiter thought that the author probably was unknown to the Professor and stated—

“ As I have had often the honour of conversing with him, I can with great truth assert that he is truly amiable in his morals, most learned and humble in his discourse, and superlatively affable and courteous in his behaviour ; and this, joined with a solidity of understanding and penetration far above the level of an ordinary genius.”

Dr. Messiter, a well-known London physician, was a personal friend of Swedenborg, and acted as medical attendant to the author in his last illness. In his reply, the Professor desired Dr. Messiter to return his thanks to Swedenborg for the present, adding “ Considering the excellent character you give the author, I am persuaded he has the interest of religion at heart, and every friend of that interest cannot but wish success to intentions so pious and so disinterested.

<sup>1</sup> *Minutes of a General Conference, 1793.*

<sup>2</sup> *Annals of The New Church* (Odhner), 1904.

<sup>3</sup> *Documents concerning The Life and Character of Swedenborg* by Dr. Rudolf L. Tafel, 1875-1877.



Of the parcel of books received by Professor Traill, only one *The Brief Exposition* is mentioned by name. At the time, this had newly appeared in Amsterdam, but already it was translated into English.

As will be related later, Receivers of the Doctrines who had come from England were resident in Alloa in the closing years of the eighteenth century. It is likely, however, that the original impetus to the study of the Writings in Scotland arose out of an advertisement inserted by the Manchester Printing Society (a Swedenborg Association) which appeared in the Edinburgh newspapers in 1800, and read as follows :—

“ A Society of Gentlemen, zealous to promote the eternal well-being of their fellowmen, wish to acquaint all who feel themselves concerned about their everlasting state, that information of a most solid and interesting nature, both respecting that state and also concerning the evidences, the design and the genuine sense of the Christian Scriptures, may be found in the following works, which are therefore earnestly recommended to the reader’s most deliberate examination.” Here follows a list of works by and relating to Swedenborg.

It is likely that the first Scottish Circle of adherents arose in the capital. No doubt, in its earlier stages, the movement in Scotland developed as it did south of the Border. First, a few interested readers would come in contact with each other and meet together for mutual edification. Then a desire for a form of Church service would manifest itself leading ultimately to the formation of organised societies.

“ Here and there ” it is related in *New Church Worthies*<sup>1</sup> “ a few individuals in Edinburgh had obtained a knowledge of the truth, a few in Glasgow and in Dundee in the early years of the century.” A chief promulgator of the time was Mr. T. Parker, a retired barrister who received the Doctrines in London through Mr. Hindmarsh in 1788. A former Wesleyan preacher, both he and Mrs. Parker were greatly respected by John Wesley himself. On embracing New Church principles, his business connection, which was principally among religious friends, almost entirely disappeared. Thereupon, he relinquished the Bar and came to Scotland, and it was mainly through his efforts that the New Church became established here. For a few years he taught the Doctrines in private, but after a memorable visit of Rev. Robert Hindmarsh to Scotland in 1817, Mr. Parker preached in public. Circles of earnest students now met at Glasgow, Edinburgh and Alloa.

<sup>1</sup> *New Church Worthies*, by Rev. Dr. Bayley, London, 1884.

## EDINBURGH SOCIETY.

The Edinburgh Society of the New Church was formed by eight persons, and met for the first time on 8th October, 1815. The Leader was Mr. T. Parker, formerly mentioned, who is described as having been a burning rather than a shining light. Two years later, following a visit of Rev. Robert Hindmarsh, the Society increased between 50 and 60 Receivers. While in Edinburgh, Mr. Hindmarsh addressed 700 persons on a week night lecture in the Freemasons Hall. On Sunday he preached three times, over a thousand being present, and many people brought food with them to the hall. This made it unnecessary for them to leave between sermons and ensured that a place would be available for them. One old lady attending was heard to say " At last, in my old age, I have found a true way of salvation—a true road to Heaven " Mr. Hindmarsh is also reported to have amazed yet delighted his hearers at the simple yet sublime instruction which he proclaimed. The first meeting place of the society was in Skinner's Close but by 1826 premises in East Thistle Street were occupied. In 1829 Mr. Parker, who had acted as lay leader died and Rev. Wm. Bruce was Ordained and became Pastor to Edinburgh Society. He was the first New Church minister in Scotland. Mr. Bruce is believed to have been a relative of the famous Abyssinian explorer James Bruce, and was the author of books still studied in New Church Circles, including *Commentaries* on Matthew, Mark, Luke and the Revelation. In 1851 he left Edinburgh for a long London pastorate.

A Church at 6 Infirmary Street was the Society's Place of Worship in 1850 and although a move was made to the Lower Music Hall, George Street, shortly afterwards, the Infirmary Street building again was occupied for over half a century from 1853. For a long time the pulpit was occupied by Leaders and students until in 1880 Rev. W. A. Presland was inducted. During his pastorate the then Countess of Hopetoun took a great interest in the Society. Other pastors at Infirmary Street after Mr. Presland left for Accrington were Revs. Mark Rowse and L. A. Slight.

The Infirmary Street Church was, in 1905, sold for use as a furniture store, the last service being held on 28th November of that year. The Society now met in a hall in Picardy Place, but in 1910 a further move was made to 12 Gayfield Square. In this square a temporary church later was built and opened on 16th June, 1912 ; according to the title deeds, the site and the building passed to the landlords after a lease of twenty one years. Accordingly, the Society vacated these premises in 1933, and for a period ceased to meet. After some years, however, the few local stalwarts commenced monthly services, and today Edinburgh

Swedenborgians meet in a Frederick Street Hall. Here, monthly services are conducted by Rev. A. A. Bain, minister of the New Church in Paisley.

An interesting fact in connection with the denomination is that any person may present a child for baptism. In former days this resulted in many non-church going people bringing their children for christening, including service families temporarily stationed in Edinburgh. When the Old Age Pension Scheme first was introduced, a large number of requests were received for baptismal certificates from persons all over the country. These were required as proof of age under the new scheme.

#### PAISLEY SOCIETY.

The first Paisley meeting of Receivers of the Doctrines was formed in 1807 by eleven persons. These were greatly encouraged by the visit of Rev. Robert Hindmarsh, mentioned in connection with the Glasgow Society, in 1817. At this time, their Leader was Mr. Robert Morton. About 1808, when the Thread Industry was experiencing a period of depression, several of the members emigrated to the neighbourhood of Detroit, where they commenced a Society of the New Church, one of the first in America. A fully organised Paisley Society was started in 1834, when Mr. Morton again acted as Leader. Two years later, the average attendance was fifteen, and the meetings assembled in Mr. Mortons' house. A library of Swedenborgian literature was maintained, towards which members paid 8/- yearly. Steps then were in progress to obtain a settled minister but it appears that this move came to nothing. About ten members were in the habit of travelling to Glasgow to attend the Communion services in the Church there.

In 1848, the meeting was located in Barr Street, with D. Gilmour and R. McArthur as Leaders. In 1854, another layman D. Fleming, was in charge, and six years later the opportunity arrived to acquire the premises then occupied by a Baptist congregation at 12 George Street. This Chapel, originally built by the Wesleyan Methodists, is still in occupation by the Society. On moving to the new building, where worship commenced on 13th September, 1861, Barr Street Church was sold for £250. When the new building was occupied, "the necessity of getting a suitable pastor who would be able to take up all his time and attention in furthering and building up the New Church in the hearts of its members" was minuted. On 5th March, 1873, a call was given to Rev. Mr. Barlow, of London, whose stipend was to be £150. Mr. Barlow, who was Principal of the New Church Theological College, accepted the call to become the first New Church minister in the town, where he remained for three years. Since then the succession of pastors has been :—



1876 - 1887—Rev. Lawrence Allberth, B.A. (Cant.).

1887 - 1896—Mr. L. A. Slight (Mr. Slight was ordained in 1890 while serving the Society as their Leader).

1896 - 1900—Rev. L. G. Hoeck.

1900 - 1919—Rev. Charles A. Hall.

1920 - 1925—Rev. Richard West.

1926 - 1949—Rev. Joseph D. Dufty.

1949- - —Rev. A. A. Bain.

Of the above, the Rev. Charles A. Hall, was the man of most outstanding ability. He was author of several books on New Church Theology and for many years editor of the *New Church Herald*, and his work on Arran is still very popular. The present minister, unusual in New Church circles, is a native of Scotland who was brought up in Glasgow.

Among prominent members of the congregation in the past was Mr. David Spiers, who prospered greatly in worldly affairs, and who assisted liberally the cause of the New Church in Paisley and elsewhere; it is believed that his generous help permitted Rev. Wm. Bruce of Edinburgh to publish his *New Church Commentaries*.

Unlike most New Church premises, the Paisley Church is situated in a well-populated district. Consequently, members are recruited from the immediate area in much larger proportion than in other Scottish causes in the denomination.

#### GLASGOW SOCIETY.

In 1809, a Glasgow man, Alexander Paterson, visited Edinburgh. Here, he came in contact with Mr. Parker, mentioned earlier in the account of Edinburgh Society. On returning home, he transmitted his enthusiasm for the Writings to others. On 19th September, 1813, a Society was formed in the city consisting of five men; Alexander Paterson, William Roberts, Robert Mackie, William Bell and John Stirling—based upon the "Five particulars of the new Heaven and the New Church." These are set forth in "The True Christian Religion" No. 3.

1. God is one, in whom there is Divine Trinity; and He is the Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ.
2. A saving faith is to believe on Him.
3. Evil actions ought not to be done, because they are of the devil and from the devil.



4. Good actions ought to be done, because they are of God and from God.
5. A man should do them as of himself; nevertheless under this belief, that they are from the Lord operating with him and by him.

Mr. Parker from Edinburgh was invited to lecture in Glasgow and a reading meeting was held on Thursday evenings. Rev. Robert Hindmarsh, during his lecture tour in 1817, spent a week in Glasgow speaking every evening in a room in the house of Mr. Wm. Attwell, who then acted as Leader locally. On a Sunday morning, he preached in the Unitarian Church to 500 persons, in the afternoon to 700, while in the evening, at a meeting in the Andersonian Institute, over a thousand were present.<sup>1</sup> These lectures led to a wider knowledge of New Church Doctrines and to a greater demand for its publications. From 1824 till 1830, the Glasgow Society met in Hutchesons' Hospital and in 1830 two groups existed, the second meeting in St. Andrew Street. Two years later, both appear to have joined forces, meeting at the latter address.

In 1834, Rev. David G. Goyder became the first resident and Ordained New Church minister in Glasgow with a stipend of £54 12 0.<sup>2</sup> The Society, in 1835, rented a building at 104 Brunswick Street, and at the time of Mr. Goyder's ordination, thirty-three persons were in membership. The hall had been fitted up as a church at a cost of £30 and was known as "The Wee Kirk." Three services were held on Sunday during winter months, and two in summer, with attendances of between 70 and 120. The Annual Collection totalled about £28. Mr. Goyder continued at Glasgow until 1847, when he resigned, "having been misinformed regarding the views of the congregation about some financial disappointments the minister had encountered in the commercial world." His stipend then was £60, and he received in addition New Year gifts from many of the members. Mr. Goyder was a noted lecturer on Phrenology, and he tells in his autobiography that some of the Swedenborgians felt that he devoted too much time to this science and too little to biblical studies.

The first Place of Worship specially built for the New Church in Glasgow was opened on 2nd July, 1848, at 61 Cathedral Street by the Rev. Edward Madeley who several times was President of the General Conference of the New Church. The pastor now was Rev. T. Oliver Prescott, who had come from the U.S.A. to visit Europe. While staying in Glasgow, he preached in Brunswick Street and was invited to become the minister. This invitation he accepted and continued until 1862.

<sup>1</sup> *New Church Worthies*, by Rev. Dr. Bayley, London, 1884.

<sup>2</sup> *The Autobiography of a Phrenologist*, by David G. Goyder, F.E.S., London, 1857.

A writer in a New Church publication in 1924 paid tribute to the "loving reverence with which (Mr. Prescott's) teaching and example remained with those who knew him." Cathedral Street Society was known as a centre of a group of men and women able to enter intellectually into the things of faith and many were in comparatively affluent circumstances.

A notable ministry was that of Rev. J. F. Potts, B.A., who occupied the pulpit from 1867 until 1892. Mr. Potts, as well as exercising a powerful ministry, is widely known for his work in translating Swedenborg's writings and compiling the monumental Swedenborg Concordance. On his resignation he left for America and adhered to those who formed the General Church of the New Jerusalem as will be related later, a small secession from the Congregation took place.

By the beginning of this century, the character of the district surrounding Cathedral Street Church had changed. Formerly a good class residential area, it was now a centre of business. Accordingly, when a commercial firm in adjoining premises made an offer for the church, the building was sold by the congregation which moved temporarily to the Christian Institute, Bothwell Street. About this period, too, services were held in Hillhead Burgh Hall.

A site for a new church in Woodlands Road was purchased from Glasgow Corporation Parks Department. The foundation stone of this building was laid by H. C. Fairlie, Esq., on 21st September, 1907, and the church opened on 20th September, 1908. Rev. J. J. Thornton was minister at the time, and the attractive church building housed also a hall, class room, and a library. The latter room now houses the New Church Reference Library for Scotland, initiated in 1913, being opened to commemorate the Centenary of formation of the Glasgow Society in 1813. The Church has a number of outstanding windows of stained glass, including one designed by Sir Noel Paton.

Succeeding ministers included Rev. E. V. E. Schreck, who took a great interest in the fitting out of the Library : Rev. E. A. Sutton, M.A., who left for London on his appointment as Principal of the New Church College : Rev. R. Teed, who left to carry on the work of the church in Australia : Rev. E. Passey : Rev. E. J. Pulsford (son of the last minister at Alloa) : and the present pastor Rev. Alan Grange, B.A., who is President-nominate of the Annual Conference of the New Church to be held in Glasgow this year (1956).

Services regularly are advertised in the local press and these include usually a quotation from the work of Swedenborg. Since the amalgamation of the two Glasgow societies in 1955, Woodlands Road Church has been a centre of increased activity.

## GLASGOW (QUEEN'S PARK) SOCIETY.

About 1880, some members of Cathedral Street Church felt that the New Church cause in Glasgow would be strengthened if another Society was to be established in the South Side of the city. The Queen's Park Society therefore was formed and in 1886 a plot of ground on Queen's Drive was purchased from the Corporation of Glasgow. Handsome buildings for church and school purposes were erected, and the Society so formed was often known as Glasgow South.

The first minister of this Society was Rev. Frank Sewall, M.A., D.D., an American, who became known to the Society while visiting Glasgow. Being induced to accept the pastorate, Dr. Sewall remained for three years, after which he returned to America. He is widely known for his writings on Swedenborg and as a philosopher. The ministers who followed were the Revs. William Presland, J. J. Woodford, S. J. C. Goldsack, who removed to London on being appointed Secretary of Conference, Frank Holmes, Clifford Harley, and the last of the series Rev. Rupert Stanley, B.A., who accepted a call to the Kensington Society, London, towards the end of 1953.

The Society was now in a state of decline, owing to the death of older members, and the small number of newcomers available to take their places. On 11th March, 1955, this Society decided to amalgamate with the Woodlands Road Society, and to continue the joint congregation as the Glasgow Society of the New Church in the Woodlands Road buildings. Former members of Queen's Park Society remain hopeful that a new effort some day will be made in the South Side of Glasgow.

Among prominent laymen at Queen's Park, Andrew Eadie is remembered for generous support and for his conspicuous success as a Lay Preacher. William C. Dick, M.A., F.E.I.S., attached to the Society, also has taken a leading part in New Church organisation in Scotland. Mr. Dick is author of *The Bible—Its Letter and Spirit*, published by Messrs. Dent, which enjoyed a considerable circulation. Recently, he completed a new translation of *The True Christian Religion* from the Latin of Swedenborg, a task which occupied the translator during the leisure time of ten years.

## DUNDEE SOCIETY.

At the time of formation of the Societies in Glasgow and Edinburgh, a few Receivers lived in Dundee. At this stage a preacher named Whitefield arrived on the scene. He was a very attractive speaker who had studied New Church publications in Manchester before coming to Scotland.



A large Dundee chapel was without a minister. Here, Mr. Whitefield was asked to preach to the congregation, who heard him with approval. He then offered his services as regular supply and an agreement was reached whereby he was to act as pastor receiving "such income as came freely in," whatever it might be.

"Though Mr. Whitefield's doctrines were new and strange to the people, they heard him gladly" runs an account of this period. Unfortunately, some instability of character appeared in the pastor, and his influence declined to such an extent that he finally left the city. However, much of his teaching had been culled from Swedenborg's *Heaven and Hell*, which led a number of his hearers to examine this and other works by that author.<sup>1</sup>

An Association of admirers of Swedenborg's writings was formed in 1817 by a group in which Mr. Peter Smith, later a respected Leader, was a prominent member. In 1824 "Young Mr. Bruce, who had been Secretary of the Edinburgh Society for seven years," was invited to Dundee, and on his acceptance, a Society on orthodox lines was formed. After three years, the labours proved too much for Mr. Bruce's physique, and he returned to the capital. Mr. Smith then acted as Leader, with some success, and won universal respect. His untimely death from an accident on 27th December, 1834, was greatly regretted.

In the following year, Mr. Charles Dickie was unpaid Leader. The average attendance at services was 40 during winter months, and 30 during the summer. On special occasions, however, congregations of from 250 to 700 were attracted to hear visiting ministers from Glasgow. At least half of these attending were ordinary working people, and the place of meeting was a Masonic Hall.

In 1838, a Society of 28 members at Barrack Street is reported.

The Dundee Society had by now lost its former strength, and was dormant prior to 1850. Round about 1884, however, Monthly Services in Thistle Hall were conducted by Missionaries. From 1891, a meeting place in Rankine's Court, High Street, was occupied, and Mr. Pulsford of Alloa acted as Honorary Pastor to Dundee Society in the years before his death in 1899. In 1902 the Society had ceased regular meetings although it is entered in the local *Directory* until 1905-06.

#### ALLOA SOCIETY.

About 1789 Messrs. Wright and Hands, from London, settled at Airthrey. In connection with a copper mine at that place, they operated

<sup>1</sup> *New Church Worthies.*



a smelting furnace in Alloa. On leaving from the district shortly afterwards, they presented several New Church works to friends with whom they had come in contact. Arising out of this, a small meeting came into being.<sup>1</sup>

In 1831, a Receiver of the Doctrines, Allan Drysdale, who was a Smith and Brassfounder, came to Alloa and began to conduct meetings in his own house each Sabbath. Those in attendance numbered about fifteen, all being working people. Four times annually New Church clergymen from other towns visited Alloa, and on these occasions a school room was hired to accommodate the larger crowd who assembled. In 1841, they moved to a room in Mill Street, which in 1872 was fitted out as a church. Here, services were continued under Mr. Drysdale's leadership until his death in 1876. Of Mr. Drysdale we are told by a contemporary "I cannot do otherwise than speak of him in terms of admiration. He is one of the most unselfish men I ever knew. Following a most laborious calling (a Blacksmith), at which he labours most indefatigably, he finds time to write discourses of equal ability with some of the most talented Swedenborgians." At this time negotiations had begun in the erection of a church at Greenfield, Mr. Drysdale leaving £50 for this purpose. In May, 1876, at a special meeting, Mr. John McLachlan was appointed Leader, and it was then resolved to apply for admission to the General Conference. This application was granted, and the congregation operated from then on "in an orderly form." Greenfield Chapel was opened in January, 1877, and these services were conducted by Mr. McLachlan and Mr. Wm. McLeod. In 1879, the latter died, and Mr. McLachlan was licensed to preach and administer the Sacraments. In 1880, Mr. Edward M. Pulsford was inducted to the charge and continued in Alloa until his death in 1899. For three years, services were continued with the aid of preachers from Glasgow and district, but in 1902 the church was sold. Later it was used as a Mission Hall by the late Rev. Dr. L. McLean Watt, the minister of St. Mungo Parish Church, and afterwards sold to the Plymouth Brethren, who continued to use the Chapel.<sup>2</sup>

A notable Alloa layman was Mr. J. McArthur Moir, President of the Scottish Association of the New Church, for the long period of eleven years—from 1892 to 1903.

<sup>1</sup> *Report of Commissioners on Religious Instruction, 1837. Alloa and Tullibody* (L. MacLean Watt, Editor), Alloa, 1902.

<sup>2</sup> Communicated by Superintendent Wilson, Alloa.

## DUNFERMLINE SOCIETY.

Shortly after the missionary visit by Rev. Mr. Goyder to this town, about 1835 referred to later, his Quaker host wrote "I think I can say with truth and great pleasure that thy visit to Dunfermline and thy labours in it were received with much pleasure by the people, and thou has left a favourable impression of the Heavenly Doctrines of the New Church."<sup>1</sup> The writer, Mr. Joseph Neil Paton, a damask designer, shortly afterwards was instrumental in opening a small New Jerusalem Chapel near his home in Wooers Alley. Apparently, he acted as pastor and wrote several pamphlets, one of which, issued in 1846, was entitled *The True Priesthood of the Holy Jerusalem Vindicated*. Mr. Paton, who died in 1874, was the father of Sir Joseph Noel Paton, R.S.A., the well known artist.

The Chapel was seated for eighty, and sixty persons were in the habit of attending in the early forties.

On the Census Sunday in 1851 the attendance was only 13, and no further details of the Society have been traced.

## GREENOCK SOCIETY.

Receivers in Greenock are referred to in many early Scottish records. A Society was formed round about 1882 and services were held in the Union Hall, East Shaw Street, where in 1884 the Leader was Mr. Alex. McNeill. This work terminated in 1888, the membership not having exceeded 14 persons. At various times, new activities in the form of lecture courses on New Church Doctrines have been initiated here; a Study Group, meeting in mid week, existed as recently as 1941.

Other places where Short-lived Societies or groups existed for short periods include Stirling and Bridgeton (Glasgow).

## THE SCOTTISH ASSOCIATION.

The original Association of New Churches in Scotland was formed prior to 1822.<sup>2</sup> This was the North British Missionary and Tract Society of the New Jerusalem Church, and the first meeting was held in the "Gardiners" Hall, Potterow, Edinburgh, which appears to have been the meeting place then of the Edinburgh Society. The first meeting (of which the Minute is undated) "Took into their consideration the propriety of appointing a committee in Edinburgh, who, together with the minister

<sup>1</sup> *The Autobiography of a Phrenologist*

<sup>2</sup> *Notes by Rev. E. Passey, etc.*

or Leader and President of every other New Church Society of Scotland, should take charge of and manage the general affairs of the New Jerusalem Church in North Britain."

Missionary work was undertaken in Dundee, St. Andrews, Dunfermline, Auchterarder, and Perth. In 1828, Mr. Rendell, of Newcastle, visited Scotland and preached in Fife and Perthshire. In early Minutes two figures are given—thus—1827-71, the latter figures being the number of years of the Second Advent. In July, 1835, the North British Society, after having been abandoned for a period, was revived in Glasgow, when the gathering was attended by friends from Edinburgh, Paisley, Greenock, and other parts, and letters were received from the Society in Dundee, from Dunfermline, Berwick-on-Tweed and from Mr. John Stewart, the oldest member of the church in Scotland. Since that time, the annual meeting has been held in rotation in the churches of the various Societies in Scotland. In 1874, the Association resolved itself into the Scottish Association of the New Church which; in 1906, was further reorganised and formed into a corporate body. This was to conform with the regulations of the Board of Trade, and the Association is formed of Receivers of the Doctrines of the New Church for the purpose of religion, and not for the purpose of gain. Amongst other activities, it prints, publishes and distributes books and pamphlets. Among these there is a notable work by Rev. J. J. Thornton entitled *A Short Creed*, issued in 1907 at the time when a number in the orthodox Churches in Scotland were pressing for a new form of simplified Creed. Copies were distributed to some two thousand clergymen in Scotland and many more were sold. The Association organises also courses of lectures on the teachings of Swedenborg and the New Church, which are promoted in different towns. Often from these a study group is formed which continues during ensuing months to examine the Doctrines, under the leadership of a New Church clergyman.

#### AN EARLY MISSIONARY.

An interesting account of the experiences of an early Swedenborgian Missionary is contained in *The Autobiography of a Phrenologist*, by Rev. David G. Goyder, F.E.S. The author, who came to Glasgow in 1834 as minister to the New Church Society there, suggested to his congregation that a quarterly visit should be made to scattered members of the Church. This suggestion was favourably received and later that year Mr. Goyder visited Berwick-on-Tweed, Alloa, Dunfermline and Dundee. In the last place he delivered a lecture on "The Atonement" to an audience of 800 persons. Coming to Dunfermline, where he had a letter of introduction to Mr. J. N. Paton, a Quaker, favourable to the



Doctrines of Swedenborg, he was received in a very kindly manner. On Mr. Paton spreading the news to workmen in the various table linen factories, an open-air meeting was held where Goyder addressed 150 people on the Sanctity and Divinity of the Sacred Scriptures.

Later that evening in Mr. Paton's home beside the Abbey. Mr. Goyder had the unique experience of retiring to a bed which had been originally the resting place of King James VI. This was only one of the antiquarian items with which the room was furnished—others being thumb-screws, a crystal dish containing a bone of Robert the Bruce, and other sombre relics, part of his hosts collection. "I certainly felt a little nervous" states Mr. Goyder "and could have wished for another apartment. But occupying the position of a minister of the Gospel I forbore to complain." Shortly afterwards, although Receivers in this town were called infidels, and had odious appellations heaped on them, the small congregation as previously described, developed at Dunfermline.

Periodic visits were paid by Mr. Goyder in the early years of his ministry at Glasgow, to Paisley, Greenock, and Airdrie and other towns. He entered also into a controversy with Rev. George Harris, the Unitarian Minister in Glasgow. In the course of this, he spoke in one of the largest halls in the city, which was crowded to the door, when he delivered an address "Affirming the supreme Deity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Mr. Goyder himself states modestly that he was listened to "with breathless interest."<sup>1</sup> His lecture was published in pamphlet form, but the expected answer from the Unitarian side did not appear.

During the great Atonement Controversy, Mr. Goyder undertook another preaching tour when he delivered lectures on the subject to audiences at points between Alloa and Aberdeen. In the latter town, it is surprising to read that he was asked to assist at the Communion Services of a city church. The clergyman who was unorthodox enough to invite a Swedenborgian into his pulpit at this season "was recognised by neither of the large Synods of Presbyterianism." Almost certainly the church would be Shiprow Chapel, which once belonged to the Relief Church, where Rev. Hugh Hart, formerly of Paisley, ministered independently to a numerous congregation unaffiliated to any sect. Mr. Goyder found the protracted services of the Communion Season very trying, and at their conclusion was "quite prostrate" He notes also that his visit to Aberdeen was ruined by the almost continual pipe-smoking of his ministerial host, which caused him to leave the city in a state of nausea!



In the course of this trip, one of the towns visited was Auchtermuchty. Having booked the Guild Hall, Mr. Goyder sent the Town Drummer round to advertise that "a Home Missionary from Glasgow would deliver a discourse." When the news spread that the visitor was a Swedenborgian the local clergy declared that these doctrines were not only delusive but devilish. "This raised a very uneasy feeling in the town against me" writes Mr. Goyder "and there were some who were desirous of driving me out of the town. Others thought it fair I should get a hearing." A very uncomfortable atmosphere pervaded the packed meeting, and when the final prayer was concluded three men approached the preacher; after shaking his hand, they asked if he had a journey to make that night. On hearing that he intended going on to Falkland, the three men, who were prominent local people, became his bodyguard. A gang of men, apparently were lying in wait for the preacher of a novel doctrine, and intended to stone him out of the town. Only by having this escort was Mr. Goyder "secure from injury," and he reached his destination without incident.

#### GENERAL CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM.

This branch of the New Church has its headquarters at Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania. It was formed in 1897 and is episcopal in organisation. In fact, in this respect its organisation resembles the plan proposed at the Conference of 1793, earlier referred to. During the ministry of Rev. J. F. Potts, in Glasgow, some disagreement arose in the congregation there regarding the "priesthood" of the New Church. Mr. Potts inclined to the view now held in the General Church—that of a three-degree ministry—and later went to America, where he adhered to the General Church. A small party who supported him withdrew from Cathedral Street Church and met together in a room in Waterloo Street, Glasgow.

This group never exceeded a dozen, and to-day only five persons in Scotland are in membership of the General Church. These are ministered to by Rev. Frank S. Rose, a clergyman who has rather a wide parish. His time is spent in acting as pastor to the isolated Receivers of the General Church in England, Scotland, Wales, Holland, Belgium and France.

Among its Scottish adherents is Mr. Archibald Bowie, aged 91, who has been a member of the General Church almost since its inception. Mr. Bowie is author of *A Catechism from the Writings and the Word* privately published by him. Services conducted by Mr. Rose are held twice annually at Balmore, near Torrance, Glasgow. A feature of General Church worship is the fact that its Liturgy contains a form of Service for Betrothal.

## THE LORD'S NEW CHURCH.

In 1937 a prolonged doctrinal conflict in the General Church ended with the removal from office, by episcopal action, of a minister, and the resignation of over one hundred members.

The small organisation founded by these seceders is unique in its wide-scattered nature. One congregation is in Bryn Athyn, U.S.A. : one in Durban, South Africa : and the third in The Hague, Holland ; while work of a missionary character is undertaken also in South Africa and in China.

In Great Britain, the adherents—fewer than a dozen—are ministered to by Rev. Frank F. Coulson, a former " Conference " minister who joined The Lord's New Church in 1954. Of interest is the fact that Mr. Coulson is a grandson of the late Henry C. Fairlie of Glasgow, formerly a prominent lay figure in Scottish New Church articles, and to whose memory there is a stained glass window in Woodlands Road Church.

## THE NEW CHURCH TO-DAY.

" It will probably astonish most people to learn that the most energetic and active propagandists of modern religious sects are the Swedenborgians."

The above statement appeared in the *London Times* on 5th June, 1886. Many books and pamphlets continue to be published by the New Church Press and the associated Swedenborg Society, and although rising costs may have slackened the pace of the 'eighties the New Church still justly could be described as a body of energetic publicists.

The church as a whole in Britain is governed by " The General Conference of the New Church " with offices in London. About sixty local societies exist in England and Wales, and the church is represented in many parts of the world. Services are conducted according to the Liturgy of the church and resemble those of the episcopal bodies. A feature is that a Bible stands open on the altar, signifying that the true and spiritual sense of the Divine Word is now opened and unfolded through the writings of Swedenborg and the ministrations of the New Church.

In Scotland two active congregations remain—those at Glasgow and Paisley—in addition to the group in Edinburgh. There are also fifty Scottish " Isolated Receivers " who are in regular contact with church headquarters, and the pastoral supervision of these scattered members is a feature of New Church organisation which could be copied with profit by many other small denominations.

Throughout the history of the New Church many persons of education and ability have been drawn to join its membership in Scotland. Nowadays, few new adherents take the step of joining ; but, at the same time, many visitors attend the services or write to ministers and officials for information regarding the peculiar standpoint of the New Church, and ask for copies of publications.

The attendances at New Jerusalem Places of Worship in 1851 numbered 211 in the morning, 67 in the afternoon, and 120 in the evening. To-day, the church in Scotland comprises a group of devout worshippers numbering about three hundred. My friends in the denominations, however, state that the few within the church do not reflect fully the great interest shown in many quarters in the Doctrines and Revelations of Emanuel Swedenborg.

The information on which this paper was based has been collected from many sources—in particular, I must thank Rev. C. H. Presland, London, and William Dick, M.A., Glasgow, for their assistance.

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